

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SIG-03 MMO-04 PA-02 USIE-00
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
XMT AMEMBASSY FREETOWN
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY BANGUI
AMEMBASSY KIGALI
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY MBABANE

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING MARCH 6, 1978

FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE NOON
BRIEFING, MARCH 6, 1978:

Q: TOM, DR. BRZEZINSKI HAS EXPRESSED HOPES THAT THE
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ORGANIZATION FOR AFRICAN UNITY MIGHT FIND SOME WAY OF
SOLVING THE ETHIOPIAN-SOMALIA CONFLICT AND I WAS WONDERING
IF YOU AS DEPUTY SPOKESMAN FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT COULD

GIVE US, SAY JUST TWO OR THREE OR FOUR MAJOR ACCOMPLISH-
MENTS OF THE OAU WHICH COULD MAKE DR. BRZEZINSKI'S HOPE
SEEM REALISTIC?

A: NO, LES. I DON'T THINK I CAN DETAIL TWO OR THREE OR
FOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS OR LACK OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

Q: COULD YOU MENTION ONE?

I MEAN WHAT HAVE THEY DONE? DO YOU KNOW OF ANY MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THIS MAGNITUDE THAT THE OAU HAS DONE THAT PERHAPS THE PUBLIC IS OVERLOOKING?

A: THIS IS A VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM IN THE OGADEN. WE BELIEVE THAT IT SHOULD BE RESOLVED DIPLOMATICALLY. IT IS A VERY TREACHEROUS SITUATION AND WE ARE FULLY BACKING THE OAU EFFORT AND WE CONTINUE TO DO SO.

Q: I AM WELL AWARE OF THAT. I AM JUST WONDERING IF YOU COULD INDICATE ANY MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE OAU THAT WOULD GIVE SUBSTANCE TO THIS HOPE , TOM?

A: I HAVE ALREADY REFUSED TO DO SO.

Q: TOM, WHAT ABOUT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER? THERE HAVE BEEN TWO OR THREE PROMINENT PUBLISHED REPORTS THAT THESE DIFFERENCES EXIST.

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DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT?

A: NOT REALLY.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES WHEN HE WAS AT THE PRESS CLUB THE OTHER DAY STATED THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF THIS ADMINISTRATION WITH REGARD TO THE SO-CALLED LINKAGE QUESTION. THAT IS THE POLICY OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND I REALLY CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING FRUITFUL HERE ON WHAT THIS PERSON THINKS OR THAT PERSON THINKS. BUT WHAT WE ALL THINK IS THAT THE PRESIDENT EXPRESSED THE POLICY OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

Q: TOM, ELSEWHERE IN THE AREA.

YOU HAVE HAD MORE CHANCE, I PRESUME, TO STUDY THE TERMS OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. YOU HAVE BEEN TALKING TO THE BRITISH ABOUT WHAT YOUR REACTION, WHAT YOUR FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS ARE GOING TO BE NOW?

A: LET ME SAY I AM REALLY PRETTY MUCH WHERE THE SECRETARY WAS ON FRIDAY UP IN NEW YORK. I AM REALLY NOT MUCH FURTHER THAN THAT. IN FACT, I AM NOT ANY FURTHER THAN THAT. SO, I WOULD REFER YOU TO THE SECRETARY'S RESPONSE TO A QUESTION UP THERE. I THINK IT IS AVAILABLE IN THE PRESS OFFICE.

BUT I AM NOT IN A POSITION NOW TO COMMENT ON THE SUBSTANCE
OF THE AGREEMENT WHICH WAS REACHED.

Q: HOW ABOUT YOUR DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES IN THE WAKE OF

THE SETTLEMENT, ARE YOU IN TOUCH WITH THE FRONT LINE
PRESIDENTS? ARE YOU WORKING WITH THE BRITISH TO GET IN
TOUCH WITH THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS TO SEE HOW THEY
ARE GETTING --
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A: WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH ALL THE PARTIES
AND WE ARE IN TOUCH WITH THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS AND
ON ANY NUMBER OF LEVELS.

Q: ARE YOU EXPECTING ANY VISITORS THIS WEEK TO
WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT.

A: YES, WE DO. BISHOP MUZOREWA WAS IN NEW YORK TODAY
AND WE EXPECT THAT HE WILL BE COMING TO WASHINGTON
TOMORROW (MARCH 7) AND WILL MEET WITH THE SECRETARY IF
WE CAN WORK OUT THE DETAILS.

Q: ANYBODY ELSE?

A: NOT THAT I AM AWARE OF, NO.

Q: TOM, AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL -- WILL THE U.S. TAKE
THE POSITION THAT THIS SETTLEMENT SHOULD BE GIVEN A
CHANCE, OR THAT NO CONDEMNATION OF IT SHOULD BE VOTED
UNTIL FULL DETAILS ARE KNOWN?

A: I'M NOT IN A POSITION TO GIVE YOU WHAT OUR POSITION
WILL OR WILL NOT BE DURING ANY SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE.

LET ME SAY THAT IT SEEMS TO BE CHANGING BY THE HOUR UP
THERE IN NEW YORK. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME INFORMAL CONSUL-
TATIONS THIS MORNING AMONG SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERS AND
WE HOPE THAT THIS DISCUSSION WILL FURTHER THE SETTLEMENT
-- THE CAUSE OF SETTLEMENT -- ALTHOUGH IT IS TOO EARLY TO
PREDICT THE RESULT OF THOSE CONSULTATIONS UP THERE.

WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE KEY PRINCIPLES EMBODIED
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IN THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY FOR
A LASTING SETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD BENEFIT ALL RHODESIANS.

Q: WHAT PRINCIPLES?

Q: ARE YOU TRYING TO GET THE DEBATE POSTPONED?

A: I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT FOR YOU.

Q: TOM, ARE YOU SAYING THAT THE SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA DOES NOT EMBRACE THE PRINCIPLE OF "MAJORITY RULE?" WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT WHEN YOU SAY "KEY PRINCIPLES?" AS FAR AS I KNOW THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IT AND THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN IS THE ABSENCE OF MUGABE AND NKOMO -- NKOMO SPECIFICALLY.

A: AS I SAID, I AM NOT GOING TO COMMENT ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL OR THE AGREEMENT WHICH WAS REACHED IN SALISBURY LAST WEEK.

Q: WELL YOU ARE COMMENTING ON IT BY SAYING THAT YOU CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THE KEY PRINCIPLES -- YOU ARE BY IMPLICATION SAYING THOSE PRINCIPLES ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE SETTLEMENT THAT HAS BEEN REACHED.

I AM JUST WANTING TO KNOW WHAT PRINCIPLES YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT.

A: LET ME SAY THAT WE CONTINUE TO MEASURE ALL SUGGESTIONS FOR A LASTING SOLUTION BY THE STANDARDS SET FORTH IN THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN; AND WE, AS I SAID A MINUTE AGO, REMAIN COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH ALL THE PARTIES TO SEE WHETHER SOME ARRANGEMENT WHICH IS LASTING CAN'T BE WORKED OUT.

BUT I AM NOT, AS I SAY IN A POSITION TO COMMENT ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE AGREEMENT REACHED IN SALISBURY. I'M SORRY.
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Q: WELL IS IT YOUR VIEW THAT THE SETTLEMENT REACHED IN SALISBURY EMBRACES THE KEY PRINCIPLES EMBODIED IN THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS?

A: I THINK THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF WHAT IS IN THAT SALISBURY AGREEMENT IS THE SUBJECT NOW OF ONGOING DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES AND I AM SORRY, I AM JUST NOT AUTHORIZED TO COMMENT ON IT.

Q: CAN YOU TAKE DICK'S QUESTION?

A: I'LL TAKE IT --

Q: WELL, TAKING IT DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING --

Q: TOM, DID BISHOP MUZOREWA ASK FOR A MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT?

A: I DON'T KNOW. I WILL CHECK IT.

Q: BUT FROM WHAT YOU SAY, THERE IS NO -- THEY ARE TRYING TO ARRANGE A MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY -- CAN WE ASSUME THAT THERE IS NO CHANCE THAT HE WILL MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT?

A: NO, I DON'T THINK YOU CAN ASSUME ANYTHING. I HAVE NOT HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT PLANS FOR A MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT

CARTER AND BISHOP MUZOREWA. I JUST HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT IT. BUT AS I SAY, I WILL BE HAPPY TO CHECK IT FOR YOU.

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BUT ALL I DO KNOW IS THAT IF THE BISHOP IS GOING TO BE IN TOWN TOMORROW, THAT WE WOULD TRY TO ARRANGE A MEETING BETWEEN SECRETARY VANCE AND THE BISHOP.

Q: "WOULD TRY TO ARRANGE?" OR, "IT HAS ALREADY BEEN ARRANGED?"

A: WELL THIS MORNING WHEN I WAS IN WITH THE SECRETARY, HE LIFTED THE PHONE AND SAID, "LET'S SEE WHETHER WE CAN'T WORK IT OUT FOR THE AFTERNOON."

SO I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THAT, IN FACT, HAS BEEN ARRANGED YET. THAT WAS AT 8:00 O'CLOCK THIS MORNING.

Q: THE SECRETARY DOES PLAN TO MEET HIM THOUGH" THAT'S THE KEY POINT.

A: YES, IF IT IS CONVENIENT TO THE BISHOP, IF HE IS GOING TO BE IN TOWN TOMORROW.

Q: I AM NOT CLEAR WHAT YOU SAID, TOM, ABOUT THE DEBATE. IS THERE ANY QUESTION ABOUT THE SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE?

A: WHETHER THERE WILL BE A SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE?

Q: YES.

A: I AM JUST NOT UP TO DATE ON THAT, DICK. I MEANT TO CALL SOMEBODY ABOUT THAT JUST BEFORE COMING IN HERE, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE ARRANGEMENTS ARE -- IT HAS BEEN EXTREMELY FLUID UP THERE THIS MORNING AND I JUST DON'T KNOW.

Q: TOM, SEVERAL DAYS AGO HODDING PROMISED THAT HE WOULD LOOK INTO THE SUBJECT OF LIBERIA.

A: YES.

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Q: THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES REPORT THAT IN LIBERIA: "THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IS OPEN TO ALL WHO MEET THE AGE AND CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENTS."

BUT THIS REPORT FAILS TO MENTION THE CITIZEN -- WHAT THE CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT IS -- WHICH I FOUND AT THE LIBERIAN EMBASSY IN ARTICLE V OF THE CONSTITUTION: "NONE BUT

NEGROES OR PERSONS OF NEGRO DESCENT SHOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR CITIZENSHIP IN THIS REPUBLIC."

AND IT ALSO STIPULATES: "NO PERSON SHALL BE ENTITLED TO HOLD REAL ESTATE IN THIS REPUBLIC UNLESS HE BE A CITIZEN OF SAME."

AND MY QUESTION, TOM: DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT REGARD THIS LIBERIAN CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION AS UNIMPORTANT?

A: LET ME JUST SAY THAT WE ARE AWARE THAT THE LIBERIAN CONSTITUTION OF 1847 CONTAINS, FOR HISTORICAL REASONS, PROVISIONS WHICH LIMIT CITIZENSHIP TO AFRICANS OR PERSONS OF AFRICAN DESCENT.

I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY FURTHER CHARACTERIZATION FOR YOU.

Q: WELL IF I COULD FOLLOW THAT UP, TOM --

IN 1847, WE HAD A CONSTITUTION. NOW IT'S 1978 ... ERIC E. SVENDSEN, OF YOUR LIBERIAN DESK, SAID THIS MORNING THAT THESE PROVISIONS OF THE LIBERIAN CONSTITUTION WERE ORIGINALLY INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT. BUT IN THE PROCESS OF TEN UNCLASSIFIED

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DRAFTS GOING TO 15 OFFICES, IT WAS REMOVED BECAUSE, "IT WAS THOUGHT INAPPROPRIATE BECAUSE THERE HAD BEEN NO COMPLAINTS."

BUT HE SAYS THAT HE HAS NO IDEA WHO ALTERED THIS DELETION OF THIS SEGREGATION PROVISION.

MY QUESTION IS: ISN'T PAT DERIAN'S OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS?

OR IS IT WARREN CHRISTOPHER?

A: I HAVE NO IDEA.

Q: WELL COULD YOU EXPLAIN WHY THEY WOULD DELETE SUCH A PROVISION, TOM?

A: I REALLY CAN'T, AND YOU KNOW I AM NOT EVEN AWARE THAT THE PROVISION WAS DELETED. I'M JUST A THIRD PARTY --

Q: I WASN'T UNTIL THIS MORNING.

A: I JUST AM UNINFORMED. I HAVE BEEN IN BELGRADE FOR TEN DAYS AND I AM JUST NOT INFORMED ABOUT THAT.

Q: I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD TAKE THE QUESTION AND INQUIRE? WHO IT WAS --

A: NO.

Q: WHY NOT?

A: BECAUSE WE GENERALLY DO NOT GO INTO A "WHO STRUCK JOHN" ABOUT DECISIONS -- BEFORE THEY BECOME OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT POLICY. I AM HERE TO EXPLAIN WHAT OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT POLICY IS. I AM NOT HERE TO EXPLAIN POWER STRUGGLES WITHIN THE BUREAUCRACY.

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Q: OF COURSE.

NOW, TOM, JUST ONE LAST ONE ON THIS. THIS EXTENSIVE BOOK COMPILED AT CONSIDERABLE EXPENSE, I PRESUME, IT WAS WITHIN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FEDERAL LAW.

A: YES. THAT'S RIGHT.

Q: AND PRESUMABLY, YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO INFORM THE CONGRESS AS TO THE EXISTENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THIS REPORTS SAYS THAT LIBERIA HAS ONE OF THE BEST HUMAN RIGHTS RECORDS ON THE CONTINENT.

AND YET EIGHT LINES LATER IT SAYS THERE IS PUBLIC FLOGGING.

AND THEN IT DELETED THE PROVISION OF RACIAL SEGREGATION.

NOW I'M JUST WONDERING IF THE DEPARTMENT -- IF YOU THINK THIS IS BEING, YOU KNOW, IS AN EXAMPLE OF CANDOR WITH CONGRESS.

A: LES, LET ME SAY THAT WITH REGARD TO THE REPORT ON LIBERIA AS WITH REGARD TO ALL THE OTHER REPORTS INCLUDED IN THAT DOCUMENT, IT REPRESENTS OUR BEST JUDGMENT AS TO THE ACTUAL SITUATION WITH REGARD TO HUMAN RIGHTS THERE.

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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